

Tocharian typology, again. A look at the Tocharian nominal and verbal systems in the light of inheritance, areal influence and internal typological pressure

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Typologically, Tocharian takes a special position within the Indo-European tree, something that becomes apparent when texts from Sanskrit are translated into Tocharian. Two features of Tocharian have attracted special attention by historical linguists, the fusional/agglutinative typology of the nominal paradigm (e.g., lack of agreement in noun phrases with non-core cases) and the complex interrelations of transitivity increasing and transitivity decreasing mechanisms of the verbal system, pointing both in the direction of agglutinating and fusional typology. Following the basic assumption that typological structure is predetermined by either 1) inheritance, 2) areal influence or 3) internal, system-related pressure (see, e.g., Carling et al 2012, to appear), the Tocharian clause structure and valency changing mechanisms are discussed from various perspectives. The advantages and disadvantages of different methodologies for testing these three hypotheses against Tocharian language data will be considered. Results from *diachronic typology* (comparative reconstruction of morphology and construction types), *non-diachronic typology* (comparison of language-internal co-occurrence of typological features, such as constituent or word order) will be contrasted against *areal typology* (language-external matching of typological data by means of tools such as Geographical Information System technology). Finally, the possibility of system-internal pressure, contrasting with similar systems (such as Indo-Aryan) will be considered.

References

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